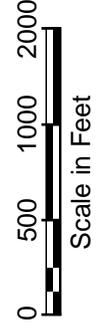
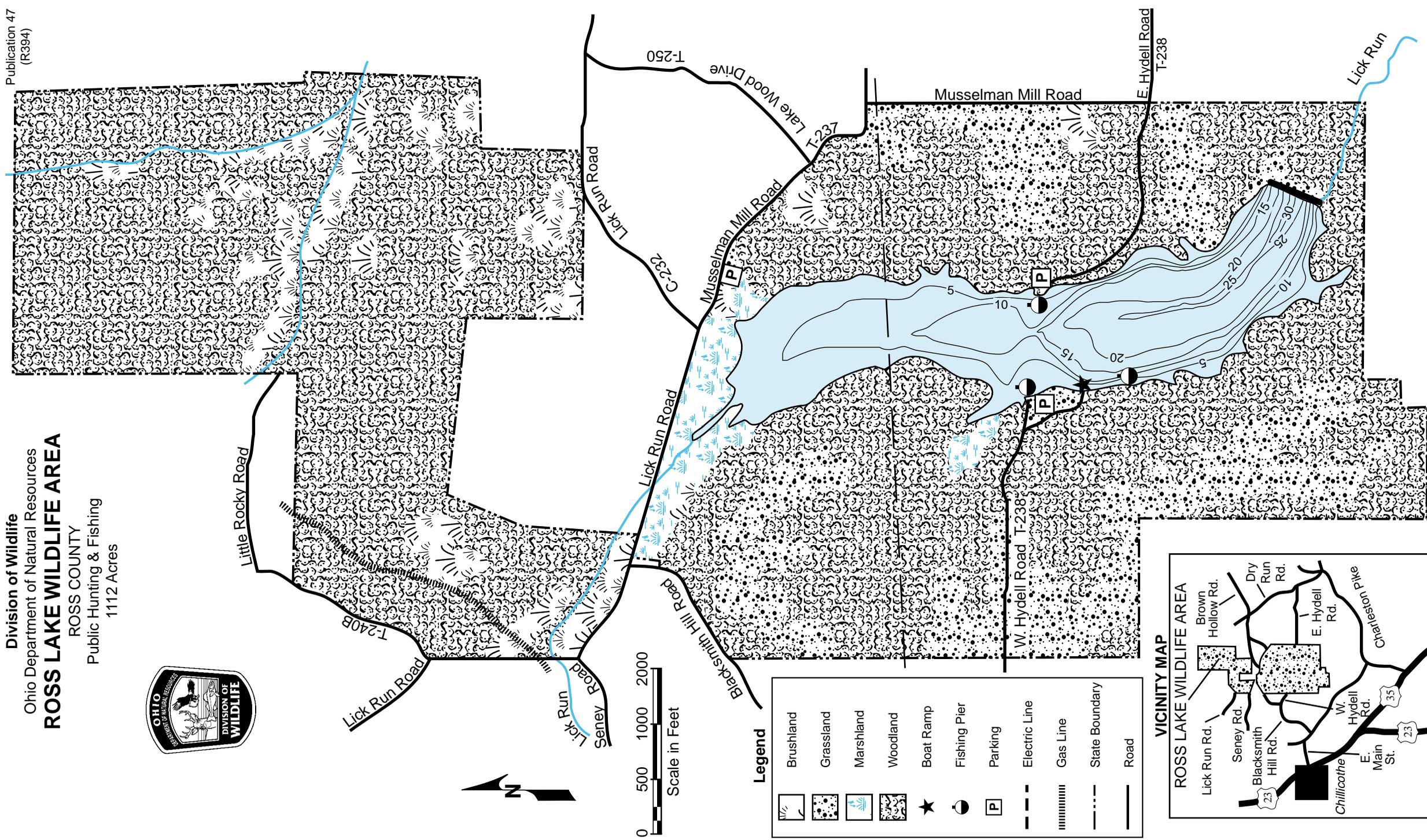


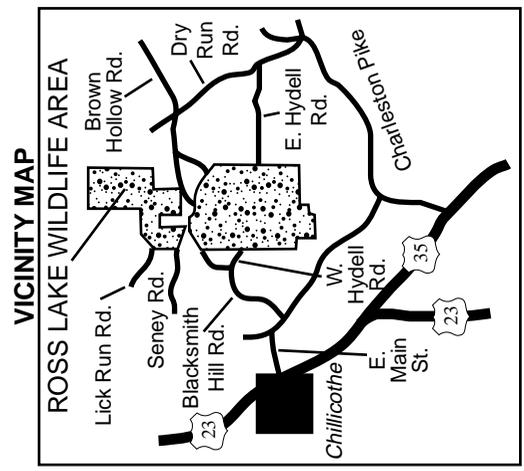
Division of Wildlife  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
**ROSS LAKE WILDLIFE AREA**  
ROSS COUNTY  
Public Hunting & Fishing  
1112 Acres

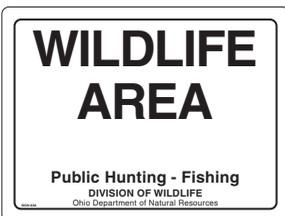
Publication 47  
(R394)



**Legend**

	Brushland
	Grassland
	Marshland
	Woodland
	Boat Ramp
	Fishing Pier
	Parking
	Electric Line
	Gas Line
	State Boundary
	Road





# ROSS LAKE WILDLIFE AREA

Ross County

## DISTANCE FROM MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS

2 miles from Chillicothe

48 miles from Columbus

53 miles from Portsmouth

## LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

This area lies two miles east of Chillicothe. Easy access is available from U.S. Route 35 via the East Main Street exit and Blacksmith Hill Road (C-238).

The 125-acre lake lies in the comparatively shallow Lick Run valley between steep slopes and flat-topped hills which are covered by brushlands, old fields, and mature woodlands.

More than half the land is wooded; oak and hickory are the most common upland hardwoods, along with lesser numbers of beech and sugar maple. Elm, ash, and maple are the major bottomland hardwoods. Patches of red and white pine have been planted in reverting upland fields. One-fifth of the area consists of reverting old fields with a mixture of shrubby coverts and native grasses. Hawthorn, wild crabapple, sumac, blackberry, and Japanese honeysuckle are important wildlife food plants in and along these old fields. Nearly one-fifth of the land is maintained as openland.

## HISTORY AND PURPOSE

This area was covered by the Illinoian and early Wisconsin glaciers, but not by the latest Wisconsin glaciation. Thus a high percentage of the land is too steep for agricultural uses. Prior to state acquisition, most of the area was reverting farmland and heavily cutover woodland. Land acquisition for the wildlife area began in 1958. Construction of the Ross Lake dam was completed in 1967.

Wildlife management work has included the protection and improvement of existing woodland, selective management of shrubby coverts, and maintenance of permanent openland.

Hunting and fishing are the major recreational uses along with nature study, hiking, boating, and bird watching.

## FISH AND WILDLIFE

The area lies in a region which contains medium to high densities of cottontail rabbits. Gray and fox squirrels, ruffed grouse, deer, and furbearers are also common. Waterfowl and woodcock occur in lesser numbers, primarily as migrant visitors. Many species of nesting birds have been recorded on this area of mixed habitat types.

Ross Lake maintains naturally reproducing populations of largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, and crappies. Channel catfish populations are maintained by stocking yearling catfish. The lake also contains populations of black bullhead, common sucker, and carp.

## HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND FISHING

Rabbits are the favorite game species. Hunting for deer and squirrels is also popular. Cropland, meadows, and brushy fields are prime spots for rabbit. The brushland and reverting old fields in combination with woodlands provide squirrel, grouse, and deer hunting. Muskrats are most abundant in the marsh at the upper end of the lake, and a limited number of waterfowl and other migratory game birds can also be found. Woodchucks are scattered throughout the area.

As in most lakes, bass fishing is at its peak in April and May. The best fishing is in the upper half of the lake at this time, in and above the stumpy area. Night fishing with surface plugs is also productive in the upper end. The best bass fishing later in the year is in the lower and middle portions of the lake, and in the deeper areas. Channel catfish and bluegills are abundant throughout the lake.

Boat fishing is permitted with electric motors. Gasoline motors are not allowed.

## UNUSUAL FEATURES

The broad, fertile valleys and adjacent steep hillsides create a picturesque beauty typical of Ross County. The original Great Seal of the State of Ohio was designed from a view from the nearby home of Thomas Worthington.

## PUBLIC USE FACILITIES

County and township roads provide good access to the area. Three parking lots are convenient to both sides of the lake and the upper end. The boat launching ramp and docking sites are on the west side of the lake. Three fishing piers have been developed to increase access to the lake by shoreline fishermen. The fishing pier on the east side of the lake is accessible for use by handicapped fishermen.

## TURN IN A POACHER

Ohio's TIP, "Turn In a Poacher," program is helping to curtail poaching throughout the state. TIP is designed to involve the public in reporting wildlife violations. Citizens who observe wildlife violations should call the TIP toll-free hotline, 1-800-POACHER.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The nearest Wildlife District office is located at 360 East State Street, Athens, Ohio 45701; telephone (740) 589-9930..